REMARKS

By this amendment, claim 1 is revised to place this application in condition for allowance. Currently, claims 1-15 are before the Examiner for consideration on their merits.

First, it is acknowledged that this amendment is being presented after a final rejection. However, it is believed that the amendment clearly overcomes the rejection of record, and that it does not require consideration or search that would place an undue burden on the Examiner such that a decision on patentability cannot be rendered in light of this response. Accordingly, it is believed that this amendment is proper for entry at this stage of the prosecution and, in light of the arguments made below, the application should be passed onto issuance.

Claim 1 has been revised in response to the final rejection of claims 1, 2, 6, 8, and 15 based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and FR '194. In this rejection, the Examiner maintained the position that Fr '194 still taught the claimed sealing cup. More particularly, it was the Examiner's contention that the sealing cup of Fr '194 had a rotation area the same as that claimed.

It is now submitted that claim 1 is distinguishable over Fr '194. Claim 1 now defines the core as having a rotation area and a stiffness area. The rotation area is defined as having the concave shape corresponding to the local reduction in thickness of the static branch. The stiffness area is defined as having a core thickness greater than the rotation area and a second connecting surface between the first connection surface of the rotation are and the dynamic branch.

Fr '194 does not teach such a structure. In Fr '194, the core has a single concave surface that allows the two branches to rotate. There is no stiffness area in the cup of Fr '194 that has a second connecting surface disposed between the concave surface of the rotation area and the dynamic branch as is now recited in claim 1. In Fr '194, there is merely a rotation area defined by the concave surface separating the two branches.

Moreover, even if the Examiner were to somehow parse the concave rotation area into two portions, the symmetry of the concave surface of Fr '194 precludes any allegation that there is both a rotation area of one thickness, and a stiffness area of a second thickness. Lacking the features of claim 1, as amended, Fr '194 cannot establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation thereagainst.

Since the revision to claim 1 effectively overcomes the rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), the Examiner can only rely on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) to further reject claim 1. However, there is no motivation in the prior art to modify Fr '194 and arrive at the invention without resort to Applicant's disclosure as a teaching template.

Since the rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) has been overcome, and there is no basis to reject claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), this application is in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to examine this application in light of this amendment, and pass claims 1-15 onto issuance.

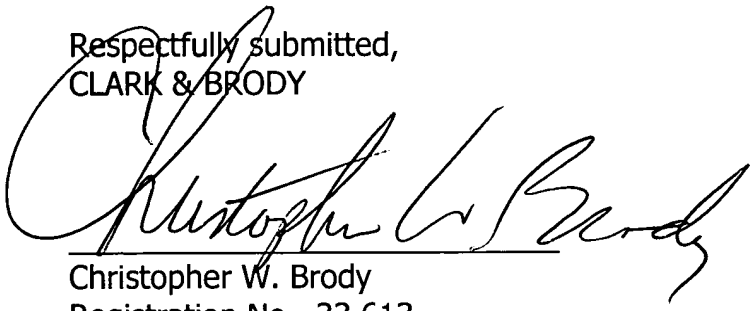
If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicant's attorney would be helpful in expediting prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 202-835-1753.

The above constitutes a complete response to all issues raised in the Office Action dated May 2, 2006.

Again, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1088.

Respectfully submitted,
CLARK & BRODY



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